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ABSTRACT

The Leadership Preparation Program, created in the last 1980s, is a consortium of area colleges and univertitis in Northeast Ohio providing staff development activities for assistant principals in the Cleveland City School district. In the summer of 1995, the first cohort of 30 teachers was conducted by the Cleveland (Ohio) City Schools and major participating institutions of higher education (IHE)--Baldwin Wallace College, Cleveland State University, John Carroll University, and Kent State University--the 2.5 year program provides a masters degree and licensure for Cleveland city teachers accepted into it; the third cohort will begin in the fall of 1997. Courses are co-taught by an instructor from the IHE and a qualified school administrator either on-site at a Cleveland school or at one of the college campuses. Courses are designed to prepare participants to be effective principals or assistant principals at elementary, middle, or secondary levels. Woven throughout all of the courses are the themes of techonology, cultural diversity, action research, current literature/research findings, data-driven decision making, and adult development. Students from the first cohort have already been hired to administrative positions within the Cleveland City Schools. A brochure, "Master Your Future in the Cleveland Public Schools," is attached. (ND)

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Being Proactive to Meet the Needs of an Urban School District: A Consortium Approach to Preparing School Administrators

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BACKGROUND OF THE PREPARATION PROGRAM

In the late 1980's a consortium of area colleges and universities in Northeast Ohio came together to provide staff development activities for assistant principals in the Cleveland City School district. This Leadership Academy, as it was called, continued to provide such activities for several years. During the consortium meetings of the higher education participants there evolved the idea of a site-based curriculum for a graduate program that would combine the talents of the various colleges and universities (Institutions of Higher Education - IHEs) and lead to a masters degree and certification for elementary, middle and secondary principals.

Through the leadership of the Cleveland City Schools and the member IHEs, a plan began to take form. Many months of planning and meeting resulted in a unique program to prepare building administrators for the special challenges facing them in an urban school district. Member IHEs included: Baldwin-Wallace College, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University, John Carroll University, Kent State University, Notre Dame College and Ursuline College, all located in northeast Ohio.

Cleveland is a large urban city located along the shores of Lake Erie in northern Ohio. The school district is made up of 12 high schools, 22 middle schools and 80 elementary schools; some of which are magnet schools for the sciences, fundamental education, multiple intelligences or the performing arts. The Cleveland School system is currently in the process of dramatic reform. The "Blueprint for Change" is setting the direction for the future of Cleveland Schools and is moving the district from a centralized system to one that is decentralized, to be phased in between 1996 and the year 2000. Each year more schools are designated as "Fast Track" schools and become self governing. Due to the impending retirement of hundreds of school administrators in the next few years, it is essential that new building principals and assistant principals be prepared as quickly as possible to replace those leaving. The new administrators must be ready to support and understand the decentralized structure, be able to handle the unique pressures that face urban districts and truly believe that schools can and do make a positive impact on the lives of students.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The four major participants, Baldwin-Wallace College, Cleveland State University, John Carroll University and Kent State University, provided leadership in developing a masters degree/licensure program jointly offered by the four IHEs to Cleveland city teachers who were accepted into and completed the program. Those selected to participate are allowed to request a first and second choice of the IHE from which they will receive their degree, and are then distributed equally among the four institutions. Each cohort of students numbers from 25-32 and proceeds through the 2.5 year program of study as a group. Case Western Reserve has provided evaluation services throughout the project.

Initial funding was obtained from the Danforth Foundation through Bank Street College. In the fall of 1995 the Richard W. Pogue Institute for School Leadership and Management, a professional development academy for principals and assistant principals, funded by the corporate and foundation community, joined the Consortium as an informal partner. This insured that the activities of the various professional development activities of the Pogue Institute and the preparation program of the Consortium would support each other. The Cleveland City Schools provides 10 days of release time for participants to complete their field experiences during the first year of the program. Cleveland also coordinates the visitations to other buildings where participants complete their field experience requirements. Classes are held either on-site at a Cleveland school or at one of the convenient college campuses.

Students are selected for the program using criteria or indicators from each of the IHEs (i.e., GPA, GRE scores, etc.) letters of support from current principals, a personal interview, and a writing sample. Each indicator is assigned a point value, and only those applicants achieving the designated number of total points are selected. The first cohort of 30 teachers began the program in the summer of 1995. The third cohort of 32 will begin in the fall of 1997.

Other details such as registration, text book purchases, selection of staff, billing among the IHEs, academic advising and a common tuition fee structure were worked out together. Syllabi were written and approved by each member institution and professors were selected to teach the various courses. One unique feature of the program is that each course is co-taught by an

instructor from an IHE and a qualified administrator from the Cleveland Public Schools. This insures that the program will address the many issues unique to Cleveland administrators in particular and urban schools in general, and yet demand the same academic rigor as the classes held at any of the campuses. A major barrier that hopefully is starting to fall because of the consortium is that of rewarding those who cross the line between the school and university (Barth, 1996). Both professor and school administrator receive a salary for teaching the course, predetermined by the school and the university. However the real reward is the learning that takes place between the two "teachers" as they share their expertise with each other and the class.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Once students are accepted and enrolled in one of the IHEs, they receive a schedule of classes for the year. Courses cannot be substituted; once a student starts the program there is no turning back. The courses taken in this program cannot be used in another masters program at any of the consortium schools. The 2.5 year program was developed to prepare the participants in the areas and skills needed to be an effective principal or assistant principal in an urban school. The first year courses for Cohort I included:

Summer	Community Dynamics	2 sem. hrs.
	Management/Leadership	2 sem. hrs.
	Introduction to Ed. Admin.	3 sem. hrs.
Fall	Field Experience I (Continues through winter/spring)	2 sem. hrs.
	Parent-Community Relations	2 sem. hrs.
	Educational Research	2 sem. hrs.
Winter/Spring	Law Governance	3 sem. hrs.
	School Finance	3 sem. hrs.

Woven throughout all of the courses are the themes of: technology, cultural diversity, action research, current literature/research findings, data-driven decision-making and adult development. Classes are held 2 nights a week from 4:45 pm - 7:45 pm except in the summer which are 4 days a week from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM.

Second Year Schedule:

Summer	Pupil Personnel and Assessment	2 sem. hrs.
	Collective Bargaining	2 sem. hrs.
	Personnel and Staff Development	2 sem. hrs.
Fall	Field Experience II (continues through winter/spring)	4 sem. hrs.
	Curriculum & Instruction	3 sem. hrs.
	Group Process/Interpersonal Communications	3 sem. hrs.
Winter/Spring	Supervision	3 sem. hrs.
	Lifespan Development	2 sem. hrs.
Summer	Leadership in Reading and Math	2 sem. hrs.
	Final Seminar: Strategic Planning	3 sem. hrs.

The total program is 45 semester hours or 68 quarter hours. IHEs requiring a Comprehensive Examination give it during the final year of the program.

As the first cohort began the program, it was apparent that cliques or groups of students were banding together to the exclusion of the others. To bring the students closer as a group, the entire cohort was asked to attend a team-building retreat held on a Saturday in early January and sponsored by the Pogue Institute. The retreat centered on building communication skills, time management and trust. Participants felt it was so successful that they suggested the next cohort attend a similar retreat before the program actually got started. This was scheduled for June 13, 1996 and the members of the second cohort attended. Once again the third cohort will attend such a session during the late summer of 1997.

Changes in the program were made for the second cohort and continue to be made as the that group begins their program. Feedback from the first and second cohorts continues to help improve the program each year. Oftentimes student voices are almost inaudible in college collaboratives (SooHoo, 1996). More attention needs to be given to this silent third party of the consortium. Much can be learned from listening to the participants as they experience a new program designed to meet their needs. Courses have been rearranged somewhat as suggested by the students and participating instructors. More of a break is now given between the end of summer and the beginning of fall classes. Since all students are also full-time teachers in the Cleveland Public Schools, time is precious. The program must continue to take into consideration

the happenings and the calendar of the Cleveland Schools. For these and other reasons the program has been extended to three years and will not be as fast paced.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONSORTIUM ARRANGEMENTS

While it may have been done before, it is generally difficult for large state universities, private liberal arts colleges and the public schools to cooperate in the operation of any single project. To collaboratively design and successfully deliver something as encompassing as a graduate degree program is close to a miracle (Meier, 1996). The collaboration of various IHE offices (registrar, bookstore, admissions, etc.) and departments, demonstrates a legitimate concern for helping a school district meet an urgent need. This process could also have profound implications for all graduate programs as professional development for teachers and administrators. If this approach proves to be more effective for the Cleveland Schools than the traditional graduate program, might it not be more effective for other districts? What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of the "cohort" approach as compared with the intermingling of graduate students (teachers) from various districts? These and other questions will be considered as the program progresses through the next few years. Following the careers of the administrators prepared through this consortium approach will also help provide answers to the many questions.

While the participants benefit from this consortium approach, the participating IHEs also benefit. The development of quality non-traditional graduate programming, the possibility of increased graduate enrollments, the expansion of the academic knowledge and research base, the establishment of a partnership with their client school districts, and the opportunity to enrich their field experience settings are just a few. The collaboration among the major IHEs has provided new insights and understanding regarding the workings of state and private schools and has enriched the curriculum of all. Better collegiality among the participants and even personal friendships have made the project enriching to all.

***ENDNOTE**

Students from Cohort I graduated this summer (1997), and a majority have already been hired to administrative positions within the Cleveland Public Schools. Cohort II is in their second year and several of those students have been moved into administrative positions. Cleveland City Schools, seeing the continued need for building administrators, voted to continue the program and 31 participants have been selected to begin the program in the fall of 1997. Newly created brochures and a massive recruitment effort helped attract over 60 people to the initial interviews. A part-time administrative position has been funded to handle the coordination and paperwork that seems to grow continually. Changes continue to be made as needed. The program remains in constant flux, which is necessary to implement the improvements as suggested by students, professors and staff.

REFERENCES

Barth, R.S., (1996). School and university: Bad dreams, good dreams. *On Common Ground*, (6), 1,5-7.

Meier, D. (1996). Partnerships between schools and universities. *On Common Ground*, (6), 27.

SooHoo, S. (1996). The loud silence: Locating student voices in partnerships. *On Common Ground*, (6), 24-25.

General Information

The Cleveland Public Schools and Institutions of Higher Education (CPS/IHE) Consortium are seeking Cleveland teachers/candidates interested in pursuing a Masters degree in Educational Administration and an Ohio's Principal Certificate. This 2 to 3 year Leadership Preparation Program (including summers) is a unique opportunity for teachers to complete their graduate coursework in an urban setting with curriculum specifically designed to meet the needs of Cleveland Public Schools' students. Courses are co-taught by university professors and Cleveland school district administrators. Classes begin in the Fall.

Satisfactory completion of the Leadership Preparation Program will qualify graduates to become Cleveland Public School administrators. Note: Program completion does not guarantee appointment to an administrative position, and there is no implication that personnel who have not completed the program will be excluded from consideration for administrative appointment.

The collaborative institutions that form the CPS/IHE Consortium include:

The Cleveland Public Schools

Baldwin Wallace College

Case Western Reserve University

Cleveland State University

John Carroll University

Kent State University

Notre Dame College

Teacher candidates selected for the Leadership Preparation Program enroll in one of the member IHE's and upon graduation, receive a Principal's certification endorsement from that institution.

Requirements

Individuals interested in seeking admittance to the Leadership Preparation Program should meet the following prerequisites:

- Be currently employed in an area school district or a graduate with a Bachelors degree and valid Ohio teaching certificate
- Have aspirations to become a principal or administrator
- Able to meet graduate school entrance requirements and committed to completing the entire program
- Committed to urban education and willing to remain employed in the Cleveland Public School District for a minimum of three years following completion of the program
- Be selected through the application process

Application Process

Candidates for the Leadership Preparation Program are asked to submit the following documents for review:

- Application
- Resume
- Undergraduate Transcripts (Minimum 3.0 GPA preferred)
- Letters of Reference

For additional information, contact:

Ms. Sharon M. Leak
Executive Assistant to the Chief
Academic Officer
The Cleveland Board of Education
1380 East Sixth Street
Room 337
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1667

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Investment

The CPS/IHE Leadership Preparation Program offers participants a special tuition rate of $1,430 for each of 7 semesters or $1,111 for each of 9 quarters. This includes the cost of tuition, college fees and textbooks.

The Ohio Educational Credit Union is offering a special loan package to Cleveland Public School participants. This package includes: a savings and checking (optional) account, a special loan rate, MAC ATM card, and TONL the Credit Union's touch-tone telephone service (24-hour access).

Teachers in the Leadership Preparation Program study curriculum specifically designed for the Cleveland Public Schools.

Master Your Future

In the Cleveland Public Schools, meeting the educational needs of students is our number one priority. And developing strong principals and administrators to serve in our schools is the goal of the Leadership Preparation Program. It not only offers teachers advanced educational opportunities, but an outlet in which to make contributions to the betterment of public education in the city of Cleveland.

Talk about it only enough to do it.

Dream about it only enough to feel it.
Think about it only enough to understand it.
Contemplate it only enough to be it.

Jean Toomer

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MASTER YOUR FUTURE IN THE CLEVELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

CSU Cleveland State University

CWRU

THE PEOPLE OF CLEVELAND
THE CLEVELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Kent State University

B·W Baldwin Wallace College

CPS/IHE CONSORTIUM

JOHN CARROL UNIVERSITY

LEADERSHIP PREPARATION PROGRAM